

The Future is Now
SNK

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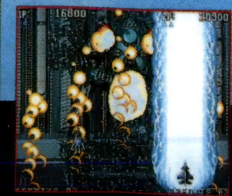
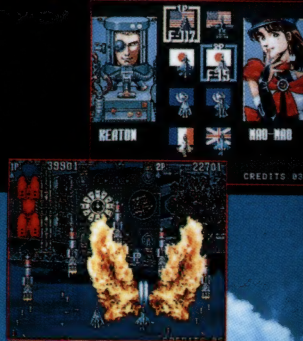
AERO FIGHTERS

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2



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MUSIC IS THE WEAPON™



NOW IT'S UP TO YOU.

FEATURING
GRAMMY AWARD
WINNER



TIME OUT

November 1994

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Coin Cascade Ltd., 5 Vulcan Place, Christchurch, Ph 338 1411, Fax 338 1410

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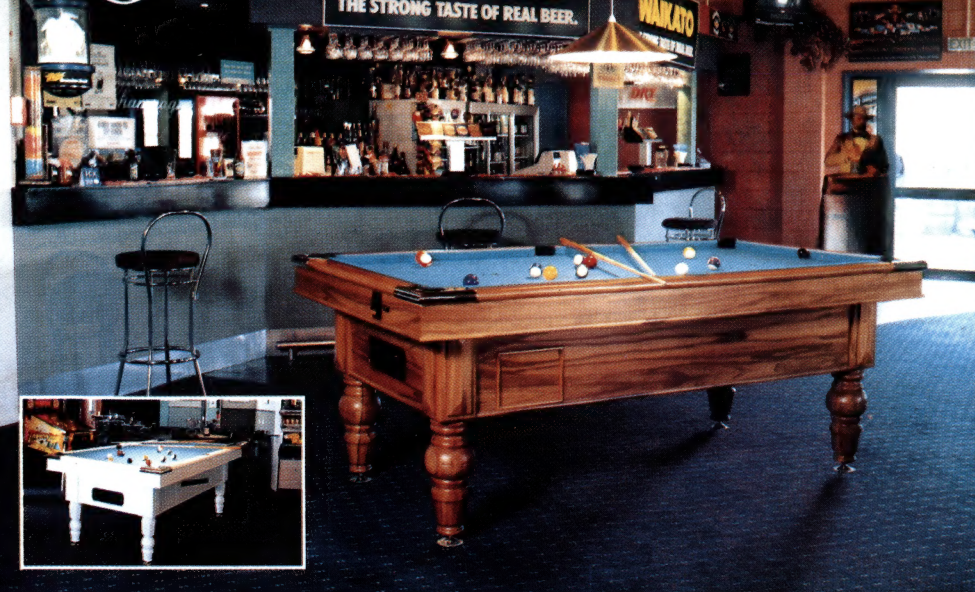
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QUANTUM POOL™



- | | |
|--|--|
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|  QUALITY MATERIALS USED |  OPERATOR FRANCHISES AVAILABLE |
|  COMMERCIALY DESIGNED |  ALL ACCESSORIES |
|  FULL SUPPORT & SERVICE |  POSSIBLE FINANCE |

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Quantum Pool tables are designed to be very attractive and yet still withstand the rigours of heavy commercial use.

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- Includes Accessories & Canadian Cues
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- Optional Colour, Timbers and Cloth Available



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Please ensure all copy is received by
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prices in this book

CHARTS

PLAYMETER USA

Pinballs

- Williams "Star Trek-NG"
- Bally "Addams Family"
- Bally "World Cup Soccer"
- D.East "Guns & Roses"
- Prem. "Rescue 911"
- Williams "Indiana Jones"
- Williams "Demolition Man"
- Bally "Twilight Zone"
- D.East "Star Wars"
- Williams "White Water"

Dedicated Games

- Sega "Daytona USA"
- Atari "T-Mek"
- Midway "Mortal Kombat II"
- Atari "Primal Rage"
- Capcom "Dark Stalkers"

Conversion Games

- Midway "NBA Jam Tourn"
- Capcom "Alien vs Predator"
- Konami "Lethal Enforcers"
- Capcom "D&D Tower of Doom"
- Fabtek "Raiden II"
- Capcom "Super SFII Turbo"
- SNK "Samurai Shodown"

- Midway "Mortal Kombat"
- Strata "Bloodstorm"
- ALG "Drug Wars"

Redemption Games

- Lazer-Tron "Ribbit Racin"
- Coastal "Jungle Jive"
- Planet Earth "Dinoscore"
- Smart "Classic Watch Crane"
- ICE "1/2 Pint Frenzy"



TIMEZONE

Dedicated Games

- Sega "Daytona USA Twin"
- Sega "Daytona USA"
- Sega "Wing War"
- Namco "Ridge Racer 2"
- Atari "T-Mek"

Pinballs*

- Bally "World Cup Soccer"
- Williams "Flintstones"
- Williams "Demolition Man"
- Bally "Corvette"
- Bally "Judge Dredd"

Conversion Games

- Seibu "Raiden DX"
- Seibu "Raiden 2"
- Capcom "Dark Stalkers"
- Konami "Run & Gun"
- Midway "NBA Jam Tourn"

Prize Redemption

- LAI "Honey Bear"
- LAI "Streets Basket Ball"
- Namco "Whack a Croc"
- LAI "Skeeroll"
- LAI "Coco the Clown"



*Data East or Gottlieb games not tested

JAM

Japanese Charts

Dedicated Games

- Sega "Desert Tank"
- Sega "Daytona USA Twin"
- Namco "Ridge Racer DX"
- Sega "Daytona USA DX"
- Sega "Wing War Twin"

Conversion Games

- Sega "Virtua Fighter"
- SNK "King of Fighters 94"
- Konami "Crazy Cross"
- Capcom "Super SFII Turbo"
- Capcom "Dark Stalker"



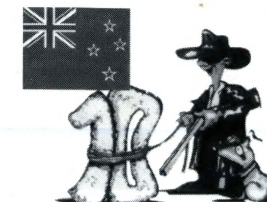
TIME OUT

Conversion Games

- Capcom "Dark Stalkers"
- Capcom "SFII:TNC Turbo"
- Seibu "Raiden II"
- Nova "Ultimate Tennis"
- Capcom "Alien vs Predator"
- Capcom "SFII:HF"
- Midway "Mortal Kombat II"
- SNK "Agressor of Dark"
- Midway "Mortal Kombat"
- Human "Grand Striker"

Dedicated Games

- Sega "Daytona"
- Sega "Aliens III"
- Sega "Outrunners"
- Konami "Lethal Enforcer 2"
- Namco "Suzuka 8 Hours"
- Sega "Virtua Fighter"



NZ NEWS

• The AMOAQ was held in Queensland on November 2 - November 5. This show tends to be a focal point for Australian and NZ operators who welcome the opportunity to enjoy some Queensland sunshine and to see the latest and greatest in equipment available from the two recent internationals in Japan and the USA.

The show again managed to improve on last years performance and continues to attract more international visitors. The opening of "Funtasia" by Leisure and Allied in the old Grundys facility also allowed operators to visit an international centre while at the show. A full report will appear in next months issue.

PARALLEL PRODUCTS

• *Recently in the course of legal action over parallel pcbs in the NZ court comments have been made as to the effect of the two new bills before Parliament at the moment. While it is not certain at this stage whether both bills will be passed as presented or indeed whether they will be passed at all it is also the position of Coin Cascade's solicitors that neither bill will affect the situation of parallels in the NZ market place. Both bills have been studied in the light of all international decisions (including the relevant cases in Australia) and in the opinion of our solicitors while one action presently used has been removed and one action strengthened the net result is that parallel products in our market will remain illegal. While products covered by exclusive rights hold a very small percentage of new games available any person considering buying products that are parallel or any person considering importing these products should be aware that they will face legal action from Coin Cascade. Such people are strongly recommended to contact their solicitors for legal advice. As the legal action will initially be directed against the operators of these products operators should also be aware of their legal position.*

CORVETTE ALL SOLD OUT!

• Williams/Bally/Midway recently announced that their next model pinball Corvette has been completely sold out due to unexpected

excess demand from Europe. This means that this model will not now be available in NZ. Flintstones is already in our market and Roadshow is expected either just before or just after Christmas.

POSTERS

• *All customers buying new product from Coin Cascade should check whether posters and other promotional material is also available. In most cases this is supplied automatically.*

AIR HOCKEY TABLES ARRIVE

• A new shipment of standard and Ultimate tables has just arrived. Both models are proving to be very popular with Arcade and Hotel locations.

FLINTSTONES ARRIVE

• *Both the Flintstones Kiddie Rides and Flintstones pinballs are now in stock and are proving popular on location. Test units have constantly been performing at the top of the earnings table internationally.*

REVOLUTION X IN STOCK

• Revolution X units now in the market have been as well received as the original Terminator 2 gun games on their release. Units can be seen in most main centres.

AUCKLAND

• *The Yahoo Family Entertainment Centre recently opened its doors in its new Howick premises located next door to the Dennys Restaurant. The Manukau Council under the provisions of its new by-laws insisted on the centre receiving its full license before opening causing a delay of some 3 weeks.*

• A number of Auckland operators have recently returned from the American Show and other travels. Phil (look what \$1 will buy) Ward left his round in the capable hands of Howard Johnstone while away and had a great time travelling. Rodger and Alice Newman picked up their normal winnings in Las Vegas on the way back. Darrell and Ray Skiffington spent some time in Thailand and Japan on the way back visiting some interesting arcades as they went. Their house has been open for some time to Japanese and Thai students on exchange programmes in NZ and the trip gave the

At the top end, single-digit plates had an indicator price in late July of \$350,000 (excluding GST), with an increment of \$75,000.

Thus as soon as the next one sells, the price escalates to \$425,000.

Typical prices and increments further down the scale are (for triple digits) \$75,000 and \$10,000, (triple letters) \$56,000 and \$5,000, (quadruple letters) \$37,000 and \$3,000, (double digits bordered by "I" - I 88 I, for example) \$26,000 and \$2,000, (four letters bordered - XXXYYX, for instance) \$5950 and \$75, (triple digits and letters - 555DDD, for example) \$4040 and \$20.

Pending releases, with details of plates selected, are publicised via newsletter.

Prospective investors apply and are chosen by ballot, the first name drawn from the applicants for a particular series paying the indicator price, each subsequent name having the series increment added.

The final person drawn (who is paying the highest price) then receives the pick of the plates on offer.

Specific plates cannot be reserved. The \$4000-\$5000 bracket is entry level for investment plates.

Of the initial purchase price, the Government takes half.

Personalised Plates' commissions as a subsequent re-selling agent is 15% for the first \$20,000, and 10% on the balance.

No restriction is applied to private trading, but the benefits of a centralised clearing house are obvious.

Of the \$7 million in investment plate business for the first half of 1994, at least one-third has been in re-selling.

As the supply of new plates is exhausted, this will become the company's sole activity.

Annual auctions limited to 20 plates are used to sell sought-after items and to publicise the market.

A range of series is represented: at the

1994 auction, where 12 plates were re-sold and eight were new releases, prices ranged from just under \$20,000 to the record \$277,000.

WARNING

Investment analysts warn that the market in plates is a highly speculative one, and should be placed in the same category as art and other collectibles.

Jeremy Lubeck concurs: "There is no ongoing potential; the only profit realised is when the plate is sold, so it would be foolish to finance the acquisition of one by borrowing. They are pure collectibles."

The dramatic gains of the first few years will not be repeated, but overseas experience indicates that the New Zealand market is still very immature and has a long way to reach its peak, he says.

Even then re-selling activity in conjunction with the structured increment system will see the value of all plates continue to appreciate.

ON THE VEHICLE

Personalised black-and-white plates are the other side of Personalised Plates' business.

Although the more distinctive ones can attract high premiums, they are not seen as investments per se, being directed more towards the fun, gift and (increasingly) business fleet markets.

They are priced at a standard \$375, again with the Government taking half.

Trading is carried out privately, with typical asking price ranging from \$500 to \$4000.

Turnover in new personalised plates is just as brisk as investment plates, and is currently running at around \$9 million per year, or 2000 plates per month.

Of the 2 billion possible combinations, 75,000 have been sold.

Expectations are that eventually one-quarter of New Zealand's vehicles (some 500,000) will sport a non-standard plate.

ACCOUNTANTS CORNER

Y BUY 1

One of the hottest capital-gain opportunities in recent times has been car plates - specifically the blue-coloured "investment" plates reserved for the investment market and not appearing on vehicles.

The top price to date was \$277,800 for the single letter "A" at an Auckland auction in June.

When first released in 1988, this plate cost \$5000.

At the time even that seemed a ridiculous amount for a piece of aluminium with an intrinsic value of a few dollars and a curiosity value of a little more, but events have proven that exclusivity should never be under-valued.

The worth of carefully controlled marketing parameters should not be underestimated either.

Investment and personalised plates are issued on behalf of New Zealand Post by Personalised Plates Limited, which won the contract in 1988.

Using overseas experience as a guide, the company reserved some 13,000 combinations expected to have investment potential in a market with New Zealand's population.

The most obvious candidates were single letter and single number plates, multiples of the same symbol up to six, or combinations with an element of symmetry.

The company identified some 100 distinctive groupings. Each was assigned an

indicative price, and selected numbers of each were released for sale.

Since 1988, release of new plates from the reserve has been determined by scarcity and demand.

"The key to balancing that demand is carefully controlled supply," according to Jeremy Lubeck, chief executive officer of Personalised Plates' investment division.

We release as conditions dictate, perhaps two times a year, and taking into account the demand for each group or series."

Due to their smaller numbers, a greater proportion of the higher profile series has been allocated (for example, only two single-letter plates remain unreleased).

Around 3700 plates have been marketed to date, 2300 having been sold and 1400 remaining in the pool.

Expectations are that the total of 13,000 should take another 12 to 15 years to release.

An unusual mechanism is employed to at least maintain a degree of appreciating pressure.

This is an incremental price applied to all remaining plates in a series every time one is sold, either for the first time or by re-sale with Personalised Plates as agents.

Increments are determined not only by the price of a series but also by supply and demand, first, and vary with shifts in the market.

Skiffington's a chance to look up many old friends. An unnamed operator also managed to pick up a new Chev truck and an even larger new boat on his trip.

An Australian based company has recently developed an open trailer mobile games centre that incorporates eight video screens. This unit neatly folds away and can be easily set up in any area for promotions and contests. The first unit is presently touring around Auckland shopping malls.

HAMILTON

Quantum Leisure has begun renovating their new 5000 sq ft premises at 203 Victoria Street. When finished this building will hold their service, spares and sales departments and provide showroom space for their range of coin operated and home pool tables. Strong second hand pinball sales to the consumer market have led them to set up a consumer section that will promote a range of "leisure" items directly to the home market. They are presently very keen on getting lists of second hand pinballs operators have for sale.

Hamiltons Multi-Plex Village 5 theatre will soon be a Village 7 with the addition of two extra cinemas expected to be completed before Christmas.

Taupo has also seen expansion in the cinema industry with the local cinema recently adding an extra screen.

Welcome to Chris O'Leary who has joined Quantum Leisure as a technician. Many operators will know Chris as he has been involved in the industry for some years.

Mike Bonnie has sold his Kawerau arcade to Hollywood Games owned by Mrs Deegan. Mrs Deegan worked at the centre previously and has a good understanding of the industry. Good luck in your new venture.

GISBOURNE

A recent application for an Amusement Centre license received a number of complaints from local businesses and the police. Seems in Gisbourne that video games are the cause of all life's problems. It is hoped that at the council meeting common-sense will prevail.

PALMERSTON NORTH

Congratulations to Bill and Donna Ollington from Top Town Cinema 4 Time Out on the addition of a new member to their family.

WELLINGTON

Pool table operation has recently increased in the Capital with a number of operators realising that new tables set on \$1 and \$2 can earn substantial amounts and continue to earn for a long period.

Spacetec have employed Helene Sandland to manage the redemption side of their new Time Out Centre. Helene will also be assisting Irene with the administration of the various businesses.

A prominent local operator has decided he will soon place his coin-op business on the market. This business is well placed for future earnings and should provide the new owner with a solid start.

SOUTH ISLAND

Norbert Snicer's recent course brought together a number of operators from different areas. While the course was of huge value the ability to network with fellow operators and discuss business etc was seen by many as being of almost equal value. It appears that this is also the place to acquire Norberts Pinball Service book as it is offered at these seminars to those that attend at a discounted price to help offset the cost of the course.

Robert Porter from Pluto's Dunedin has acquired the agency for a number of English redemption machines and has attended local shows with a display of these units. Redemption machines certainly are the way to go for future expansion.

Larry Timpany from Invercargill has decided to quit part of his life as a gentleman farmer and get a real job. Perhaps his location owners will get a chance to see the owner of the business again.

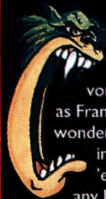
Mick Beavis recently spent some time in Christchurch with his arcade manager looking over different products. While his full time profession selling real estate tends to take up more of his time these days his centre in Blenheim is still one of the best set up arcades in NZ.

DARKSTALKERS

The Night Warriors

Capcom

Type: Horizontal fighting game.
Controls: 8-way Joystick, 6 buttons
(3 x kick, 3 x punch).



RUSHER Corpse Victor von Gerdenheim (better known as Frankenstein), along with all his wonderfully named friends, pounces into the latest Capcom beat-'em-up to scare the pants off any brave player who dares to even contemplate taking on these supernatural savages!

Darkstalkers are warriors of the night – the sort of warriors you see in old 50s movies starring Bela Lugosi and Vincent Price. (If you're really young, ask your parents about these actors and how scary they were to them in the "olden" days!) In other words, what we have here are those

truly frightening, mystical monsters who are powered by the most supernatural and evil forces.

Monsters like the Werewolf, Dracula, Frankenstein,

and the Mummy. Unlike your Aliens, Predators and Jasons, these killers have mysterious metaphysical powers, which scare the most dauntless protagonists.

Being a fan of the type of monster that is affected by the full moon, I choose to be Whirlwind Wolfman, Jon Tolbain

(Werewolf). My opponent is Snow Hulk, Sasquatch (Bigfoot). The game begins as I howl to my counterpart, the full moon. Sasquatch stands opposite me and although I do not look it, I am scared – this guy is HUUUUUUUUUGE! I wonder how any of my attack techniques are going to defeat this hulk of flesh, but I am willing to try.

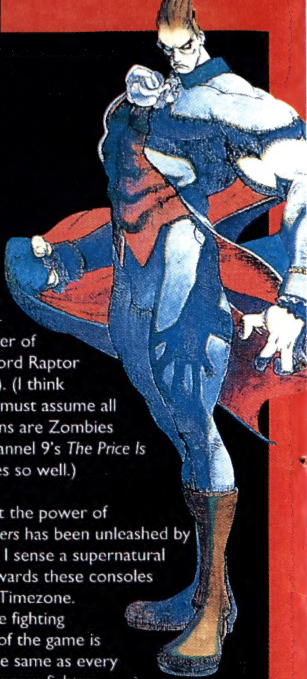
I commence with a Beast Rush and then kick a High Laser at him. He is dazed and surprised at my paranormal strength. He counter-attacks with a Big Typhoon. I am taken aback, but laugh at his attempt to defeat the howling Wolfman in me. I once again Beast Rush at the giant furball, and while he is perplexed, I administer a Wild Circular on him. As in *Super Street Fighter II Turbo*, there is a Special Gauge which rises as you use the fighting techniques. At this point of my fight, my Special Gauge has reached MAX and my power is strengthened for a limited period. During this period, I defeat Bigfoot and once again howl to the moon.

As customary, your fighter has his/her basic moves like Dash, Guard, Throwing and Revitalisation. There are 10 fighters to choose from and compete against. They are Vampire, Mummy, Werewolf, Cat Woman, Frankenstein, Samurai, Zombie, Merman, Succubus and Bigfoot. All of them have a nationality and you fight in the respective country relating to the fighter's origin. It's good to see an Aussie amongst

these mythical legends – the Rocker of Death, Lord Raptor (Zombie). (I think Capcom must assume all Australians are Zombies since Channel 9's *The Price Is Right* rates so well.)

Now that the power of *Darkstalkers* has been unleashed by Capcom, I sense a supernatural surge towards these consoles at every Timezone. While the fighting concept of the game is exactly the same as every other Capcom fighter release, it is an undeniable pleasure to be able to fight with these types of ghostly monsters. I warn you though, carry a large bottle of holy water, a clove of garlic and a silver bullet. They are coming – tonight.

MICHAEL CROOKS



SECRET MOVES

There are four secret moves per fighter. Here's one from each:

VAMPIRE (Prince of Darkness, Demetri Maximoff)
Chaos Flare: ↓, ↘, →, + P

WEREWOLF (Whirlwind Wolfman, Jon Talbain)
Climb Laser: ↓, ↑, + K

FRANKENSTEIN (Crusher Corpse, Victor von Gerdenheim)
Gyro Crush: ↓, ↘, ←, →, + P

ZOMBIE (Rocker of Death, Lord of Death)
Death Hurricane: ↓, ↘, →, + K

SUCCUBUS (Queen of the Night, Morrigan Aensland)
Shadow Blade: →, ↓, ↘, + P

MUMMY (Pharaoh from the Crypt, Anakaris)
Royal Judgement: →, ↘, ↓, ↘, + P while jumping.

CAT WOMAN (Teen Feline Dreamer, Felicia)
Rolling Scratch: →, ↘, ↓, ↘, + P + P repeatedly.

SAMURAI (Accursed Warrior, Bishamon)
Quick Slash: ←, Hold →, + P or K

MERMAN (Hero of the Sea, Rikuo)
Poison Breath: ←, ↘, ↓, ↘, →, + K

BIGFOOT (Snow Hulk, Sasquatch)
Big Snow: ←, ↘, ↓, ↘, →, + P

MICHAEL CROOKS

PINBALL COURSE

TOURS NEW ZEALAND

Recently the paragon of pinball understanding, Norbert Snicer, in co-operation with Coin Cascade Ltd, brought his immense knowledge of the subject on a wee tour to our fair shores. Norbert has been running pinball courses throughout Australia for a number of years now and is the author of the book "Pinball Machines - How They Work & Troubleshooting". In the past, those wishing to take the course had to travel to Australia (making it a pretty expensive exercise) but with enough interest shown locally the obvious solution was to run the course throughout the main centres in New Zealand.

The two day intensive workshops covered the following topics:

- Parts of the pinball and principles of

operation

- Testing and methods of troubleshooting
- Maintenance and servicing
- Book keeping and game adjustments
- Comparison with the earlier Williams System II
- How to use the operations manual
- Electrical principles and devices

The feedback we received from some of those lucky enough to have attended the course was extremely positive, with attendees feeling confident about diagnosing and rectifying common faults as they occur.

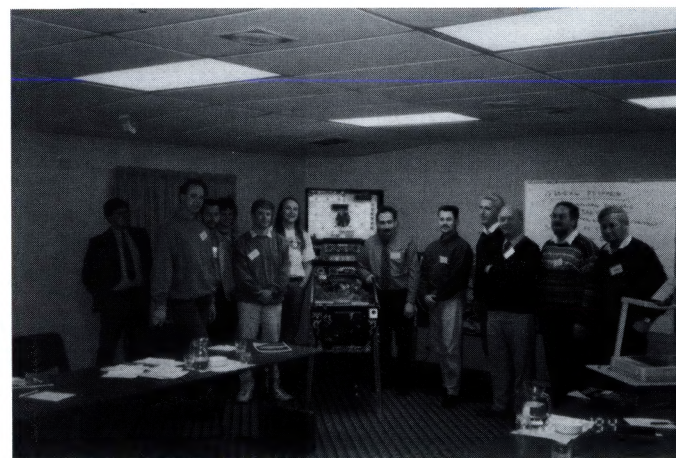
The following technicians and operators attended the courses, which will be held annually in the three main centres in New Zealand;

AUCKLAND COURSE

Mark Grundy, Richard Pearce, Leon Jacobson, Jim Wilkinson, Graeme Hoole, Tim Puka, Dan McCallion, Eric Velthusis.

WELLINGTON COURSE

Mike Bowater, Terry Howard, Brett Thompson, Bill Ollington, Ken Thompson, Tony Focas, Paul Jones, Simon Young, Cainen Humphrey, David Skerrett, Bruce Moran.

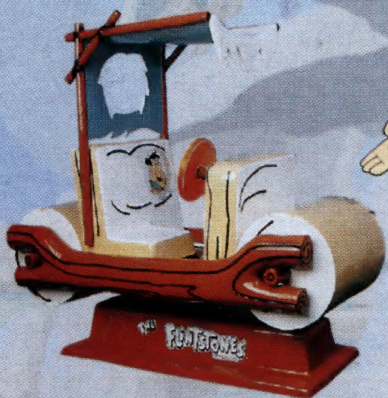


ChCh Course: Chris Bell, Tony Witheridge, Nick Lunt, Roy Pointon, Craig Bugden, Mike Enright, Norbert Snicer, Dean Clothier, Gerrard Martini, Rodger Wilson, Geoff Carson, Barry Butcher

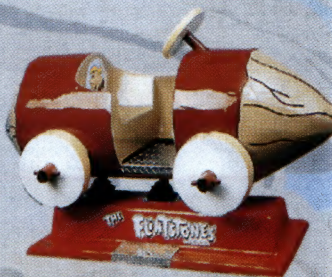


PRESENTS
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 COIN OPERATED KIDDIE RIDES

Made in the USA



Flintmobile®



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IAAPA



There is disagreement in the industry over the extent to which high technology will influence and change the face of the industry in the years immediately ahead. Some say that it is of limited potential because of cost and capacity problems. Others believe that it will significantly change the industry. But one thing is clear, hi-tech captures the imagination of those attending the trade show. The hi-tech area is a popular draw for both the mass communications media and industry operators who are curious or intrigued with the possibilities.

Hi-tech draws the press but family entertainment centres (FECs) provide more of the market at IAAPA's annual trade show, the largest amusement industry gathering in the world.

This year's show in Miami Beach, Florida, included 2,800 booths, and was held from November 2 to 4 and drew 20-25,000 people, increasing numbers of whom are involved with the rapidly expanding FEC concept.

These small scale, highly participatory, amusement and recreation centres address a need created by social and economic changes which require many people to take their leisure in shorter time frames and at easily accessible locations.

The centres offer an entertainment mix not unlike that found in the traditional amusement park: food, games, small rides, miniature golf, go-karts, etc.

That accounts for the popularity of the IAAPA show as a buying opportunity. Virtually anything needed in the industry from hardware and soft goods to consulting services was on display in the 2,800 booths.

FECs also share most of the amusement park management requirements for information and training, making the IAAPA convention workshop programme, where they can get both tailor-made workshops for FECs and participate in general amusement park training sessions - a natural draw for them.

In fact, family entertainment centres now nearly equal traditional parks in terms of membership of IAAPA. At the rate FECs are being built, that balance is likely to shift in the near future.

In the past couple of years the show has also drawn a number of representatives from space age and defence contracting companies who are exploring the possible uses of their plants and products for amusement and entertainment purposes.

Such technology must profoundly influence our industry. The problems of cost and capacity are very real right now, but to believe that they will never be overcome is to stand with those who believed that planes would never fly or that images would never be sent through the air either.

What we can already do by way of transporting people electronically and interactively into new and alien environments and experiences is only a glimpse of what will be going on in 10 or 20 years in our parks in an effort to satisfy human curiosity and the desire for adventure.

If that is a way down the road yet, the pioneers in the field were on hand in Miami Beach, tantalising attendees with the possibilities.

Many long-time exhibitors had increased the size of their displays and there were an unusually large number of first-time exhibitors bringing new products into the show.

This too, may be a response to the increased attendance from developers and operators of FECs and hi-tech amusement and entertainment centres. Miami Beach offered some unusual convention entertainment opportunities. The What's New Theatre was held in the Jackie Gleason theatre where, for many years, the Honeymooners, a comedy series that has been a favourite around the world, was filmed.

Thanks to "Intergame".

POOL PROVIDING THE BREAD

The "quiet man" of the international coin operated machine industry is the pool table. It has the most longevity, is totally non-controversial, and is the nearest thing our industry has to a sport. In a two-part series of articles we look at the game and the way it is developing. This month we look at the figures, the number of tables operating and where they are. Next month we evaluate the resurgence of the American table and its effect on its hybrid European cousin, the "billiard Anglais" with the small ball.

Unlike most other coin-operated machines, the waters around the pool table are not muddied. It is true that there are no official figures for the numbers operating, but in terms of suppliers there are comparatively few and therefore there is an acute awareness of how many exist.

According to many experts, pool is as widespread as anything else, except perhaps the humble kiddie ride. It is either established and in a replacement market situation, or it is making its initial inroads, just about everywhere.

It is a long-term investment which is secure and this is the real value of the pool table. Operators may like a quick return on their coin machines, but the beauty of pool is that it offers steady income. One of the world's great experts on the game (from the manufacturing and sales point of view), Stan McKenna of Hazel Grove Superleague, summed it up: "Pool provides the bread; other coin machines on the same location will provide the butter and the jam; but pool is the basis."

The view is not disputed by another expert, James Griffiths of American producer Valley, who feels that not only is pool a staple diet, but one which is actually expanding at a time when most other coin-operated products are suffering slowdown in sales.

The background reasons for this are manifold and will be outlined next month. The essentials for this month's report on the subject are the numbers game - always a source of considerable interest to the worldwide market.

Inevitably, the United States is by far the largest market, as the country which founded the modern game. Various forms of pool have more traditional roots; the French, Italians and Spaniards with their own varieties of caramboule, for example, and the British with their snooker tables from which developed the small-ball pool game. But the real, original, pool as we know it today started in the US, and was fostered, nurtured and brought to fruition in that market. Together with Canada, it is worth around 200,000 units, mostly

supplied (on a 10-year replacement average) by Valley and Dynamo.

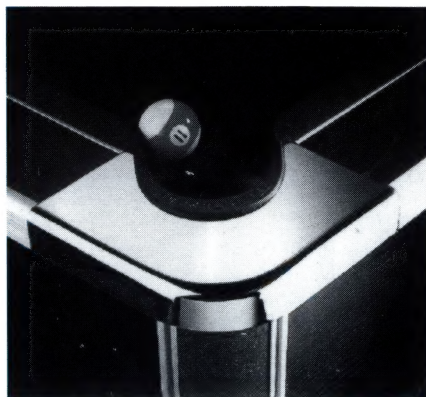
Outside of those markets, the rest of the world is worth perhaps 300,000 to 350,000 more units, with varying lengths of sit life. Occasionally this may be down to three or four years, but that does not necessarily reflect quick write-off from company books; more a case of cheap workmanship by a purely local supplier and therefore short life. It may be up to 15 years in other areas where returns may be too low to permit earlier replacement or where operators fail to understand that proper replacement could push up income.

Looking at some of the individual markets, South Africa is beginning to move somewhat and there is a healthy business building up in Morocco through tournaments inspired by France, with whom Morocco has ties. Elsewhere in Africa, the main country is Egypt with a young but surprisingly unfulfilled market.

In Europe, the west remains a strong replacement business, with some alterations in bias towards the British game and the American game (to be outlined in next month's issue), while the eastern half of the continent is "beginning to stir" as Valley's James Griffiths put it. Stan McKenna at Hazel Grove agreed: "Hungary, the Czech Republic and Poland are the main markets in the east. The numbers remain small but there is a market beginning to emerge. Russia remains handicapped by a lack of means to pay for tables."

James Griffiths has experienced substantial sales volume increases in western Europe for his American style tables while the eastern countries are a promise, but only that for the moment.

There are around 200,000 units in Europe as a whole with still some room for expansion. The majority of them are for the American game with the larger ball



elements of Triceratops, Ankylosaurus and Stegosaurus. Vertigo is part Cobra, part Effraasia. Talon is mostly Deinonychus, with the colouring and vocals of a tiger. Two giant apes, Blizzard and Chaos, both with wild hair and equally wild personalities, round out the character set.

In order to take the flat drawings to fully poseable finished sculptures, Mr Platt took Mr Leong's concepts and built fully detailed clay models. Each character had to have an individually constructed armature specially designed to offer flexibility for a particular character. Traditional ball and socket joints used in movie model armatures didn't allow this, so new improved joints were developed specifically for Primal Rage.

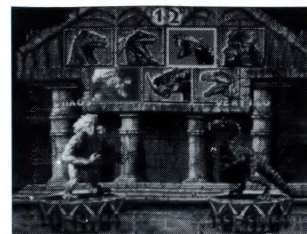
Once the clay model was finished, a plaster mould of the character was created. The finished armature was placed inside, injected with whipped latex and then baked in a special oven. Once completed, the model was carefully removed and a fully poseable three-dimensional puppet was born.

The models were then painted to give a life-like look. Details like stripes and facial colours were airbrushed according to Mr Leong's colour schemes, each designed to bring out the personality of each character. For example, Blizzard, whose home base is in the Himalayas, was given a white and light blue paint scheme to match his flowing white hair, resembling a yeti-like creature. His arsenal of ice-related moves complements his cool colour scheme.

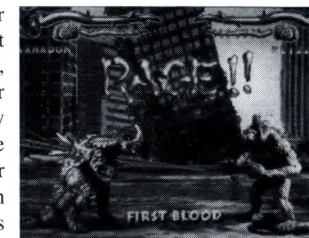
On the other hand, Diablo, the smallest of the T Rex characters, has a fiery personality and equally fiery moves. In keeping with this, he is primarily a fiery crimson with streaks of black. All the colour schemes, using bright colours and many highlights, are similar to what many scientists think ancient dinosaurs may have actually looked like, that is, more like modern tropical birds than monochrome reptiles. Final touches such as hair, teeth, nails and feathers were then added on.

Mr Kleinow and the team then took the puppets through their paces. In order to make even a single move seem fluid, nearly 100 frames of animation needed to be generated, each different from its predecessor by a series of small movements of limbs and other appendages. From these frames an appropriate number were selected

to give the fluid look for the intended move. The process was completed for each of the nearly 70 sequences designed for each character, over 400 moves in all.



In parallel to Mr Platt's puppet construction, game designer Cameron Petty laid out the move matrix, the master plan for each character's actions. Many



different types of move had to be considered - punches, reactions to being punched, death sequences, victory sequences and poses that a character adopts while waiting for the action to commence. In addition, each had to be designed with the others in mind, as for every tail whack one character may have, there must be a reaction by each of the other characters.

Mr Petty also created the storylines, designing many of the features that add depth to the game, the kind of hidden items that may take players months or even years to discover. Often these are the result of jokes between members of the team. Other hidden features only turn on at certain times or after players complete a sequence of moves at a level of the game.

In addition to the animation and theming, there are design innovations that differentiate Primal Rage from other fighting games. For example, it features a four-button control panel rather than the more standard five or six-button, with power hits mapped onto both the top and bottom pairs. This allows the diversity of moves found in six-button games while offering a layout that fits comfortably under a player's hand.

Along with this improved layout is a new way of executing special moves, allowing for more fluid combination potential. Advanced players are motivated to learn all the moves to develop the best combinations, providing the driving force for high level competitive action.

Primal Rage also features revisions to traditional one and two-player games. Rather than fighting a special boss to complete the one-player game, players must take the Primal Challenge, a fast-paced grudge match that pits the player against every foe in the game. To master this section, players have to be very good, not only knowing the necessary moves, but executing them with perfect timing. The two-player game also has a novel format, being organised in a push and pull fashion to encourage longer sessions.

Reaction to Primal Rage has already been encouraging for Atari. Players of all ages and abilities are attracted to the game by its novel graphic treatment and unique characters, the depth of game play and the dynamic sound. It is available in two formats, a dedicated 25" upright and a deluxe showcase 33" model.

PRIMAL RAGE

The making of



Following the company's incorporation into the Time Warner Interactive Corporation, Atari has launched its latest video arcade game.

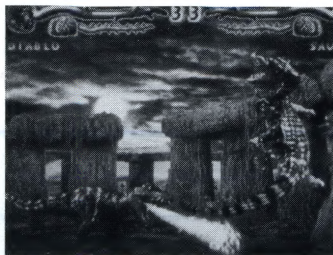
News of Primal Rage first emerged in our recent report on the company's US distributor meeting, but now we can reveal more details of its development.

The game features head-to-head fighting action and realistically animated characters. Players choose from seven different creatures, including a Tyrannosaurus Rex, a giant ape or a Cobrasaur, in an attempt to dominate the new "Urth". Using a combination of normal fighting moves, secret moves and graphic finishing sequences, they must try to eliminate their opponents.

The game uses a new proprietary stop-motion animation technique said to provide realistic and life-like character motion. In addition, Primal Rage also features the new Cage Total Immersion Audio system, which provides stereo sound to punctuate game play.

Dennis Harper, the game's producer, and Jason Leong, its lead animator, originally conceived the game two years ago as a fighting game between two T.Rex. However, when they saw how good the animation looked they decided to design additional characters, each with an individual personality defined by a unique fighting style, a storyline and a set of individual moves. The pair were certain that the stop-motion process, never before attempted on this scale for a video game, would be the best way to create a game with life-like quality.

The filming technique involves painstakingly small movements of puppet armature, allowing for very detailed sequenced character movements. The sensation of character depth for a more three-dimensional look would be possible because the puppets would be fully poseable, with a greater range of movement than games using digitised



human characters. All individual parts; arms, necks, legs and tails, are moved separately frame by frame. This gives the impression that the characters are living and breathing, always changing from one moment to the next.

Most importantly, the characters would be very different from human-centred fighting games, a novel and innovative approach to the popular fighting game genre.

During the ready sequence for Vertigo, for instance, its head bobs and weaves, the tail moves as if it were a snake, the arms move and fists clench and the neck flexes like a coiled spring. Combined with the richly detailed colouring of the puppets, the net result is a sequence that appears to be a living character awaiting the player's instruction.

The production team for Primal Rage comprised nearly 30 people and was organised more along the lines of a Hollywood film crew than a typical game design team. Indeed, top Hollywood talent was recruited in order to meet the demanding time schedule and ensure the quality of the new stop-motion technique.

Pete Kleinow, a veteran stop-motion animator whose long list of credits include projects as diverse as Gumby and Army of Darkness, was brought in to set-up and direct the newly established stop-motion studio. Dan Platt, who has made a career out of animating monsters for the movies, was tapped for his animation and model-making expertise, designing both the sculptures and the poseable armatures.

In addition to Mr Kleinow and Mr Platt nearly a dozen animators were in charge of numerous other graphic requirements, including animation support, game screens, finishing detail like blood splatters and fireballs, title design and cabinet art, all under the direction of Mr Leong.

Before the characters reached the stop-motion stage, they were rigorously designed and redesigned by Mr Leong in order to produce the look the team felt was right for each character. Since most traditional dinosaurs walked on four legs, he felt these might be seen as too slow and less interesting to fight against. Rather than limit the game to real characters, Mr Leong decided to invent an array of fantasy monsters. For example, the Armadon combines

and big pockets which tends to speed up the game and therefore, in theory, put more into the cash box.

While Valley and its main American competitor, Dynamo, view their domestic replacement market with 20,000 or so annual units as their principal bread and butter, they are acutely aware of the importance of the overseas business. Valley, incidentally, currently reckons that Canada, is a good barometer of what is happening in Europe. Said Mr Griffiths: "Canada retains strong old world ties, and as such it is the best indicator of what you can experience in Europe. For many years, Canadians all but excluded American pool. We had the lion's share of the market but sold only a handful of tables annually."

He says European sales have risen steadily although at a more moderate pace than Canada, largely due to the quality of Valley's Canadian distributor. Offsetting that, possibly, is the fact that Valley is currently negotiating with a number of possible distributors in Europe. They are particularly interested in people to look after the UK, Italy and France, which suggests strongly that they can see lucrative markets there for their products. "We're inviting inquiries", said Mr Griffiths, "but we are pretty fussy about who we become partners with. We know how important quality distribution is and how much they can reflect on our product."

Looking at other markets we find Italy stays one of the larger in Europe, with many of its own indigenous manufacturers, such as Garlando, Norditalia, Roberto Sport and others and in Spain HGM S.A. and Billares SAM dominate although Valley has made strides through consistent promotion.

The French market is largely supplied by the British, with Superleague, Supreme and Premier all figuring strongly with their British tables and Rene Pierre unquestionably the largest of the French manufacturers, using American-style tables.

In Sweden the market is just beginning to open up. Brunswick is strong through Billiard Experten for non coin-op products, but the business is switching gradually across to coin-operation. Superleague, we note has just concluded a deal with Arcadia, a Swedish company, to sell its products.

Germany has always been an American pool market, with Leonhart a leader; Brunswick and Forster also have a strong position.

POOL TABLE MARKET: SIZE & SHAPE, OCT 94

Australia	10,000
Austria	4,000
Belgium	3,000
Czech Republic	3,000
Denmark	4,000
Egypt	3,000
Finland	1,000
France	30,000
Germany	37,000
Greece	1,000
Holland	8,000
Hungary	2,000
Ireland	3,000
Italy	17,000
Japan	2,000
Mexico	10,000
Morocco	2,000
New Zealand	2,000
Norway	3,000
Poland	2,000
Portugal	2,000
Rest of Africa	4,000
Rest of Eastern Europe	2,000
South Africa	15,000
South America	12,000
South East Asia	14,000
Spain	23,000
Sweden	5,000
Switzerland	2,000
United Kingdom	65,000
US/Canada	210,000

Outside Europe there is the Middle East which is just beginning to introduce pool to some degree, notably the Saudis and in Australia the small ball game dominates, with William Edwards and AMD as principal suppliers.

The big British market, the largest single market outside of the US, is principally supplied by Hazel Grove Superleague, although there is a spot in the business for several other producers. It is solidly small-ball, but recently there have been some signs of movement on American tables (hence Valley's interest?) and even Stan McKenna at Hazel Grove accepts that on certain locations, although limited in number, American pool may be more appropriate.

Hazel Grove, of course, actually produces a table to American dimensions these days and in fact offers it in those markets where only American games are accepted, such as Germany.

Sales in the Far East are flat, particularly in Taiwan and Korea, due to a proliferation of lower-cost domestically-produced tables and the popularity of other styles of pool. Caramball is still popular in Korea.

For the Americans in particular, Mexico is a strong possibility,

especially with the NAFTA agreement between the US, Mexico and Canada, removing trade tariffs. As the economy stabilises and Mexicans' discretionary income increases, so Valley and Dynamo will almost certainly take the lion's share of the benefits.

South America is a great golden hope for everyone. Whatever might take years to fulfil in eastern Europe, South America may be half-way there already. Valley expects explosive growth in some parts of that continent within the next five years, an assessment with which Superleague agreed.

Where it is all going is clearly onwards and upwards. It is perhaps the only bright spot on the industry horizon which is readily identifiable as an area of expansion. How it goes on and up, with which type of product, is something which we will investigate next month. Thanks to "Intergame."

CRUISE

The release of their latest racing game, Cruis'n USA, marks the triumphant conclusion of a three-year odyssey for arcade game giant Williams Bally Midway.

The game takes the player on an exhilarating 3,000 mile journey along the highways and byways of that vast country, at a speed which appears to approach Mach 1. Should you find time to sightsee during your manic joy ride, doubtless you will be awed by the incredible scenery that unfolds as you speed headlong through the 14 courses on offer.

The talented design team responsible for Cruis'n USA have brought the game to life through the use of a revolutionary new technique known as "Reality Mapping." According to project director Eugene Jarvis, this game will be a radical departure from its genre's predecessors, such as Daytona.

Reality Mapping is totally different from the synthetic imagery favoured by other games, as by mapping the live-action footage on the 3-D geometry, we have created a true driving experience. The live footage allows us to incorporate a greater amount of detail than that possible with traditional texture mapping techniques, thereby enhancing the excitement of the ride. When you travel around San Francisco, Death Valley, or Washington DC, you feel as if you are there," says Jarvis.

People are tired of driving around and around a track, seeing the same synthetic trees and grandstands. People want to get in there and experience the sensations they would feel if they went driving. We wanted to leave the

player with a sense of exploration, where he can get out into the countryside and feel the freedom of the wide open road."

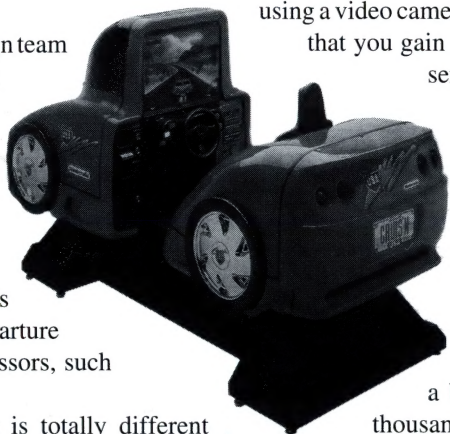
The artists from Midway spent several months on the road taking images of the highways and scenery. The game consists of 14 distinct races, each delivering a totally unique and exciting challenge, which builds the sense of exploration that is the game's greatest asset.

According to Ted Barber, another of the team's artists, one of the advantages of using a video camera to capture the images is that you gain a unique and indefinable sense of reality that is not possible using ray tracing or light shading techniques.

You are capturing things that you can't just recreate - you are capturing life itself. You can capture the exact way that light glints off a building that would take thousands of hours to reproduce using digital means, and would not have the same degree of reality that the original had."

Programming the game on a PC, the team had to create many of the tools, such as the 3-D engine and Reality Mapping software, from scratch before the game could even begin production, as there was nothing available off-the-shelf that met their exacting requirements.

The project's hardware architect, Mark Loffredo, was instrumental in developing some of the new technologies behind the game. Much of what Mark has done is being mirrored in the Ultra-64 system (AKA Project Reality) which Nintendo hopes to release on the



TIME OUT

Family Leisure Centres

COMMUNITY SUPPORT



Responding to a recent call for help, the Christchurch Time Out Centres have combined to purchase a three wheeler motorbike as a donation in support of the Hornby Youth Trust.

The Trust is a registered charitable organisation headed by local Community Constable Roger Harris who along with a small group of volunteers has been taking youngsters for fun adventure day trips out of town - usually to Lake Forsyth.



"We want to show kids they can have a good time without breaking any rules. We offer youngsters the opportunity to take part if we think they would benefit from it."

Over the past two years, with local support, they have accumulated their own van, caravan, trailer and now with our support a third three wheeled motorbike, which has been a real hit says Roger. With a Trust adult accompanying each youngster, the group usually left town about 11am, arrived and had a big lunch.

"We then run the legs off everyone, fish, cook tea, yarn and then do night drives down the Kaikatore Spit. Its quite a different experience for city kids to be out in the middle of nowhere at night. Getting away from the city is a great leveller. The kids love it, we have them waving down the police car asking if they can go out," Constable Harris said.

TECHNICAL UPDATE

PINBALL MACHINES HOW THEY WORK & TROUBLESHOOTING

By Norbert Snicer



CHANGES IN SOLENOID WIRING

The following changes have been made in solenoid wiring in Williams/Bally pinball machines.

From "Demolition Man" on, +50 VOLT wire is no longer violet/yellow, violet/green or violet/orange but it is always the RED WIRE with colour coding.

Both wires soldered to the coil will also have the same thickness.

CHANGES IN FLIPPER WIRING

The following changes have been made in flipper wiring in Williams/Bally pinball machines.

From "Demolition Man" on, flippers are wired up as follows:

+50 VOLT (incoming power) RED WIRE with colour coding
Power Coil (middle terminal) YELLOW WIRE with colour coding.
Holding Coil ORANGE WIRE with colour coding.

Please see page 22 of your book and make a note.

As much as we don't like to see changes in wire colour standards, these changes are making a lot of sense since all +50 VOLTS wires on solenoids or flippers are RED and this is easy to remember.

DARK STALKERS

PROBLEM

The coin counter on the B-Boards is being excluded, the information being held in the system.

SOLUTION

To access information:
 Press the "LIGHT PUNCH BUTTON" during the attract mode. The following information will be displayed:

1. The number of coins inserted.
2. The number of times the "service switch" is used.

From the next Capcom game the counter will be displayed in the "TEST" mode.

STAR TREK

PROBLEM

Gun Mark Switches

SOLUTION

If you are having problems with the gun mark switch actuators breaking or coming off, we have put together a switch replacement kit. The part number for this kit is A-19153. This kit includes 2 switches (with diodes) that have roller actuators and the instructions necessary for installation.

IN USA

Australian home market sometime in the next two to three years.

While our 64-bit architecture is different from what Nintendo is going to do, they are basically going to implement in their architecture what we've done today. They're on a different track with their RISK system, but the results will be very similar."

Matt Booty, sound effects leader, ensured that the SFX and music received the same degree of careful treatment as the rest of the project. The DCS (Digital Compression System) used in the game is a proprietary system developed by Midway for compressing and storing data, similar to Sony's MiniDisc technology. The sampled digital data is then decompressed in real time and played back over the machine's sound system.

This offers huge reductions in sample size without any noticeable deterioration in sound quality. First used in Mortal Kombat II and Revolution X, DCS delivers true CD quality sonics through the four hi-fidelity channels which can play back SFX, music or both.

DCS plays back straight digital recordings, not samples," says Matt. "The sound is not synthesised or digitised in any way, such as with Creative's Soundblaster FM methods of recording. Also, each of the scenery choices has its own full length musical score associated with it, much the same as in Out

Runners.

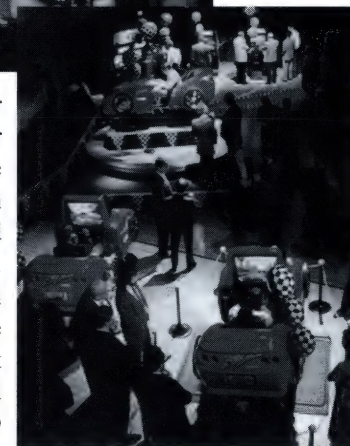
We recorded each score with the same degree of care as in a movie soundtrack, using real instruments - guitars, drums and synths. Another Midway team member, Vince Pontarelli was responsible for composing all of the original pieces, which were then put together with my sound effects."

Cruis'n USA features seven background tunes - ranging from rock to retro, disco to bluegrass. The player can choose which music plays by pressing a button on the dash at any time during the game. What this means is that everytime

you stamp your foot on the accelerator and roar off, stack you car against a barricade, or change tracks on the game's virtual CD player, it is a real world sound you are hearing that was lovingly digitised by Matt and Vince. All of this combines with the live action graphics to deliver a total arcade racing experience that

promises to be unlike any you have tried before.

However, a realistic-sounding, playing and looking game is nothing, unless you also feel as if you are in the cockpit of a car. Engineer Ted Valavanis has created the first arcade simulator cabinet to deliver full pitch, yaw and roll capabilities, combined with lateral as well as horizontal movement, giving true 3-



"Ask about our Finance options"

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D motion effects and one that is extremely responsive to the player's action.

If you are not a good gamer," says Eugene, then the simulation becomes so real that you could lose your lunch. I am not kidding, the force exerted on the gamer is pretty strong."

The array of obstacles and special features is impressive. A number of real-world hazards, such as potholes, barrels, horses and railroad crosses, have been included for added realism. Special effects include smoking tyres, flaming exhaust and some dramatic crash sequences. What is most interesting, however, is the inclusion of "hidden" features that have become standard on most modern arcade games. Cruis'n USA is no exception, featuring secret vehicle selections (see the movie Speed?) turnoffs and shortcuts.

The designers confided that their wish list included a full-immersion model with three monitors, two being used on either side to simulate the driver's and passenger's windows, with perhaps a fourth used for the rear window. However, as this would probably cost more than \$70,000, we are unlikely to see this in the near future.

Another course that was proposed by Xion was Route 66, the first Federal Highway to be constructed in the US, running between Chicago and Arizona. Graphic designers travelled for a month down the stretch of asphalt, capturing images for the game, which sadly did not make it into the final product.

Plans have been mooted for an international version that might include some Australian courses, and possibly others from Europe or Japan.

Not content to rest on their laurels and even before Cruis'n USA is officially released, the crew are hard at work thinking up other titles and uses for the ground-breaking Reality Mapping technology.

There has even been some talk at

Midway of a super hush-hush VR project in the pipeline that incorporates Reality Mapping techniques. While they were tight-lipped about specific details, the designers said that they saw Reality Mapping being used extensively in new arcade games and eventually in home systems. According to Ted Barber, who comes from a background in sculpting, synthetic worlds are cool to a certain extent, but it is reality that turns people on. For budding game designers who are bursting to break into the business, the guys at Midway have the following advice. The three best ways to get a crack at the industry are to have an interest in music, programming or art. This basically involves staying on at school and usually getting a tertiary degree or diploma in one of these fields. In addition, you must be totally dedicated (read addicted) to video games and give the job 110 per cent all the time. The hours are bad, and the pay isn't especially wonderful when compared to similar professions. You must feel a burning love and desire for the industry and be prepared to work well in a closely-knit team. According to the guys, it also helps if you have no social life.

Cruis'n USA heralds the start of a new era of interactivity for video games. Much of the technology pioneered in the game will be standard in homes in the next few years. However, for now, you will have to content yourself with your local Timezone arcade. From its stomach-churning, full-motion cabinet to its Reality Mapping graphics and pumping audio, this is a challenge that promises to keep every hard core gamer in fits of rapture for many months to come.

Eugene summed it up thus: "All future systems are going to have to get faster and they're going to have to get less expensive, which is going to be great for the game player at home because it means that everything you ever wanted is going to be cheaper and a lot cooler." Thanks to "TZM".



intimidated. For example, since video games still appeal mainly to teenagers, group the videos in one area. You wouldn't want to mix videos with redemption games for young children. Parents would forbid their youngster from playing a game than let them mingle with sometimes boisterous teenagers.

Redemption games should be arranged according to the age group they are most played by (adult, kiddie/toddler, family games etc). Whenever possible, cranes, candy cranes, and rotaries should be placed in the busiest area of the location. Never place billiard tables in the same general vicinity as the amusement games. Taking care to arrange games properly will create a comfortable environment for all players, thereby maximising revenue.

Arcade appearance, game volume, and rotation: While game arrangement is certainly a key factor to success, it is also important to keep the games clean, appealing and current to keep players interested. Sometimes, something as simple as

periodically rearranging the games within the arcade will give the room a new look and perhaps allow customers to "discover" games they may not have seen before, even though they were there all the while. This is like giving your house a new look by rearranging the furniture.

It is an excellent idea to place a list of rules and regulations in a conspicuous place, either within the room

or at the entrance, explaining to customers exactly what is expected of them ("No Food, Drink, or Smoking Permitted;" "No Gambling;" "No Loitering;" "No Foul Language;" etc). Care should be taken to keep the noise at an acceptable level for all players and spectators by adjusting the volume on each game.

Lighting: Finally, lighting is a key consideration. While the game room should not be dark or dingy, it also should not be too bright. You don't want a hospital/sterile environment. For the ideal lighting, you can place coloured plastic fluorescent light sleeves on each light. These sleeves are inexpensive and will create an interesting and appealing environment, while not making the room too bright.

By implementing a few of these basic suggestions, today's location owner and operator will have competitive edge over competition that has not bothered to do its homework.



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Lower N/I: Mike De Ruyter Ph (04) 569-9107 Fax (04) 569-9107
South Island: Gary Walker Ph (03) 338-1411 Fax (03) 338-1410

\$ DOLLARS & SENSE \$

Marketing and placement are keys to success.

In today's economy, competition for discretionary entertainment dollars is fierce. It's not easy for even aggressive location owners and operators to compete with high-tech, multimedia competition. With very few exceptions, they must have more than one source of revenue to keep the establishment open.

In this struggle to compete, some locations have gone so far as to add miniature golf, lazer-tag, and even carnival/midway type rides and amusements to the previously typical mix of amusement games. Its made these places true destination family entertainment centres.

For today's location owner/operator to be successful, it is imperative to market and promote all aspects of the location. This particularly applies to amusement games, where promotion is more critical than ever for maximum income. Unfortunately, many location owners are not aware of this fact. All too often, they inform me that their game revenue has declined dramatically and they don't know why.

Let's take a look at several likely reasons for the decline and discuss what can be done about it.

Location, location, location: During the video game boom of the early 1980s, games could be placed virtually anywhere (probably even the restrooms) and still make a great deal of money. However, the video game boom has come and gone. Along with increased competition, especially

from the consumer market, game play has shifted from destination to impulse.

In other words, today's average player generally does not seek out specific games; he plays games when they are spontaneously encountered. Therefore, it is critical to place games in viable, high-traffic spots within the location. There is a direct correlation between game placement and dollars generated.

Game arrangement and placement:

Not only is it important for games to be visible, it's also important to arrange games according to the interest and type of players most likely to play them. For a long time the primary players of amusement games were teenage and pre-teenage males. This left an untapped playerbase of everyone else - adults, young females and small children.

With the tremendous interest in redemption games in recent years, it is now possible to reap revenues from this previously untapped market of players. But the games must be arranged properly in such a way that no particular age group is alienated or



VR

Disney goes

Joshua Trehwella reports from SIGGRAPH '94, the conference on video graphics and interactive techniques.

Walt Disney revealed its first steps into the world of virtual reality by showcasing its "Disney Vision" system at SIGGRAPH '94 the world's largest conference on computer graphics and interactive techniques.

Disney has installed four prototype systems in its soon-to-be-opened Innoventions Pavilion at EPCOT, Walt Disney World, Florida, and intends installing them in other Disney venues over the next year.

Disney Vision combines the creative skills of Walt Disney Imagineering (WDI) and its previously secret research facility, with the technological skills of Silicon Graphics Inc (SGI).

WDI computer artists, working with Disney animators' paintings as reference, have built an interactive, 3-D cyberspace version of Aladdin's World, which has been animated in real time by SGI's application software. The technological heart of the system is provided by SGI's Onyx graphics supercomputers.

HEAD MOUNTED DISNEY

Somewhat surprisingly, given the quality of competing products, WDI has developed its own head-mounted display (HMD). This has to be suspended because of its weight and needs a permanent supply of air to keep its lenses from steaming over. Whilst it performs quite well it is much bigger and more cumbersome than those developed by companies such as Virtuality, Forte and General Reality and is clearly of an inferior design. However, staff at the conference hinted at



some unique proprietary elements and it may well be that a second generation will be ready before the systems are more widely installed.

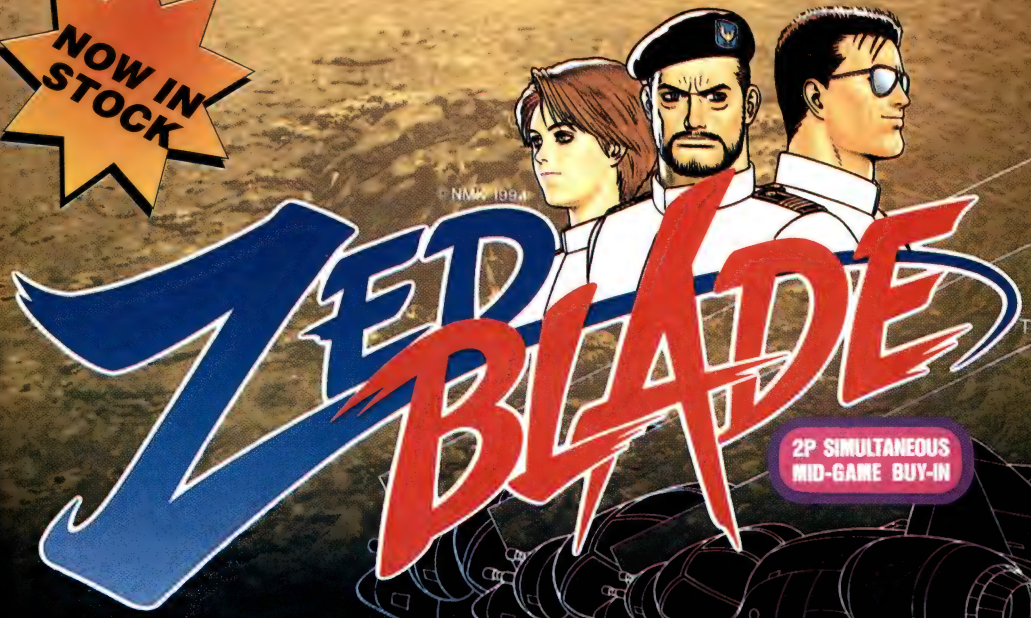
ALADDIN'S MAGIC CARPET

The first VR experience created for the system is based on the animated film, Aladdin. Participants donning the HMD are immersed in Aladdin's town, Agrabah, where, on a magic carpet, they fly through scenes from the film whilst joining in the quest for the magic lamp.

Piloting the carpet is an exhilarating experience - swooping over starlit desert one minute and then ducking and diving through narrow alleys the next. While easily guided by pulling the edges, carpet pilots need a light touch; bank too hard and the shock of impact against a building is enough to raise doubts about what is and is not real!

While the quality of the graphics is very high, the most impressive feature is a real-time computer version of Lago - one of the first virtual actors? - who acts as a guide, travelling with the pilots and helping them discover clues. Exhibiting more than 100 movements, including winking, laughing and crying, Lago is a breakthrough in real-time character animation and provides a preview of the way in which interactive games are developing at the high end of the market.

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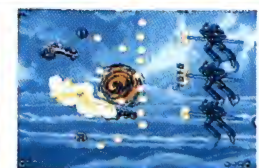
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TECHNICAL SEMINAR

**SEPTEMBER 1994
PERTH AUSTRALIA**

Recently, I was invited over to Perth to take part in a technical seminar, the first hopefully of many, not only having an opportunity to meet my fellow technical contemporaries, but also to discuss problem areas and "fix-its".

I had forgotten how long it takes to fly from Sydney to Perth, having made a short hop and skip across the Tasman, only to find that a further four-hour flight was in order to Perth, twice that of Auckland to Sydney.

All that aside: Friday 16 September. I arrived at Leisure and Allied's main factory to have a "bit of a nose" and to see how the other half lives. The main factory area used to be a garment factory before it was renovated to what it is today; a well laid-out and efficient product line, running two shifts at peak and a work force of seventy people. The technical side is split up into rooms running off the main factory area and disappearing up stairs and corridors.

Saturday 17 September. Brian Edwards of L.A.I. introduced proceedings and the meeting commenced. Well, it's down to work - S5, S6 micro-mechs from S4 universal programmable 12 product controller to S7 multi-coin electronic validators - a very frank and informative talk by Peter Smith covering areas new and old, how the market is moving and how

Micromech is coping with all the changes, new coinage and variations updating.

Well, it certainly was informative; also "chewing over the fat" problem areas, so much so that no time was left to cover the remainder of Saturday's agenda. This was then advanced to Sunday.

My main area was to be 50"-projector mega-scenes, and laser player in-house repair and testing. When you have fourteen or fifteen technicians in a room, it's not long before you are all caught up in the informative process discussing approaches to problem solving.

I must say that I really appreciated taking part and having the opportunity to meet my fellow Australian counterparts. Thanks L.A.I!

Colin Vitel, Christchurch, New Zealand.



J.A. Pastol, Chris Dobrgscu, Steph Rundle, Brian Edwards, Norbert Snicer, George Kulyk, Peter Elsley



One year has passed since the warm-up contest to decide who would enter the Team Battle Royal as Number One. With eyes set on the title of Master of Slam Masters, all contestants have been training even harder, honing their technique and practicing new deadly skills.

SLAM MASTERS II DESTRUCTION

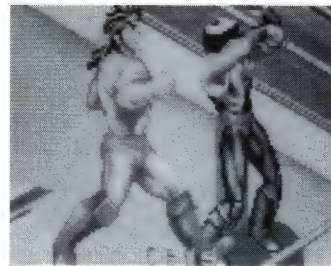
COMBAT-ACTION
GAME

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ILLUSTRATIONS: PABLO V. FERRER, J. H. HARRIS, and Mr. TETSUO HARA

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Blazing Tornado

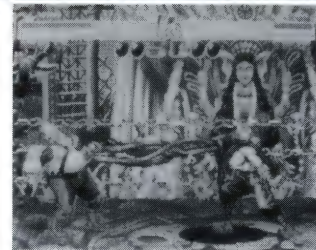
Human



A pro-wrestling video game, where up to four players can participate at the same time. More than 150 kinds of moves are available. New features include a zoom-in function, and a fight with weapons.

Super Muscle Bomber

Capcom



The third volume in the company's popular pro-wrestling game Muscle Bomber. This version is a one-on-one fighting game, which is similar to SFII. 14 characters are available to choose from. Screen presence is improved with high-resolution graphics and better sound effects, including an encouraging cheer.

Kaiser Knuckle

Taito

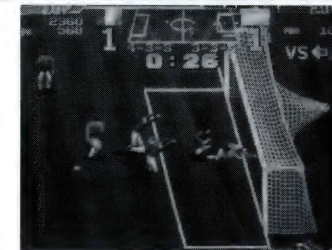


This is the company's first fighting game incorporating the Taito F3 Package System, a new mother board system. Nine characters are available, each having different special moves. This game features a "crush gauge", which increases one's attacking power by 150% when it becomes full.

NEW PRODUCTS

Dream Soccer '94

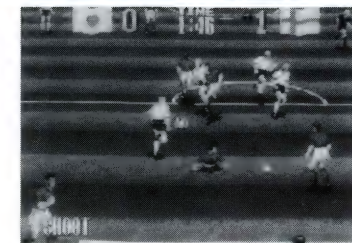
Data East



A soccer video game that features realistic scenes displayed with cleaner on-field action. Foul play is also penalised. If a referee catches it, the player is given a yellow card. When two cards are received, the player is ejected. Other features include a choice of various formations & super shoots.

Super Striker

Jaleco



The company's second Mega System 32 soccer game. It features 3-dimensional viewing angles. Eight world-class teams from different nations are available. With the close-up angle, more intense play is possible. Control is via eight-directional joystick and three buttons. Software comes in a cartridge format.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Thanks to Leisure Line, Replay, Playmeter, Euroslot, Inter Game and Jam for input into this section.

JAPAN SFII CHARACTERS NOW ON TELEPHONE

Family Mart, a convenience store chain based in Japan, has begun sales of telephone cards bearing the Street Fighter II logo at 2,000 select locations throughout the country. The cards portray three popular SFII characters, including Ryu, Ken and Chun-Li. The cards cost ¥1,000 (\$17) each and can be used with most public telephones.

CHANGES AT CAPCOM

Summer has always been a busy time for the industry and this year was certainly no exception as many of Japan's largest amusement companies shuffled their upper management staffs for the upcoming fall and winter trade show season. Below are the announced changes made by Capcom. While these changes were made domestically, many will have ramifications in the international arena as well.

President and Chief Executive Office - Kenzo Tsujimoto. Vice President and Managing Director, Domestic Operations and Production - Yasushi Kadowaki. Executive Managing Director, International Operations - Masahiro Nakamura. Executive Managing Director, Sales and Planning - Heiji Ohshima. Executive Managing Director, Sales - Mitsuo Okado. Director, Consumer Sales/New Media - Akio Sakai. Director, Financial Affairs - Yoshiro Ozawa. Director, Capcom USA - Ryu'ichi Hirata. Director, General Affairs - Fumiaki Kawamoto. Director, Production; Ueno and Matsuhara Office - Masao Yoshikawa.

SNK FIGHTS COPIES

With sales of SNK's Neo Geo system continuing to grow throughout the world, the company has pledged to produce high quality games for the existing system until at least the end of the century. At the same time, however, the company is continuing to develop games

incorporating both 32 and 64 bit technology.

One of the contributing factors in Neo Geo's continued growth, not least in the South American markets, has been the increased pressure placed on manufacturers, distributors and operators of copy PCBs around the world.

SNK now has offices throughout the continent, with Marty Kitazawa, President of SNK Corporation of America, commenting: "The action by companies which have worked so hard to prevent copies has had a big effect of the business and the Neo Geo system is succeeding because it offers high-earning games at a relatively low cost."

JAPANESE BULLISH DESPITE DOWNTURN

The recession has finally caught up with the Japanese amusement industry, according to financial results posted for 1994.

Other than Namco, Capcom and Taito, the industry turned in figures ranging from poor to disastrous. Jaleco's performance was particularly disappointing, with a drop in revenue of 26.7% in the coin-op sector. Net profits stood at ¥100 million (\$NZ1.7 million), down 85.3% on 1993.

The company blames delays in development of its planned 32-bit machine and the flat consumer game market in Europe and the USA. However, Jaleco's confidence that the current market situation is a blip was backed by its forecast of a 750% increase in net profit for 1995.

Nintendo and Sega suffered too, both blaming the strength of the yen and a price war in the European consumer game market. Sega, reporting its first drop in profits for 12 years, was down 22.7% on 1993, while Nintendo saw profits plummet by 29.8%.

Namco and Capcom reported increases in profits of 14.2% and 10.3% respectively, although both forecast a slower growth rate for 1995.

have increased in price and complexity, seemingly built to be impossible to be used by conventional operators. The market is constantly competing against consumer games machines' impact on players' spending power, while the move towards destination entertainment, commonly called Location Based Entertainment (LBE), has put new technology in competition with move conventional video amusements.

The new themed venues seem to be a popular idea, and fledgling venues opening in the US and Japan are paving the way for what many see as a new market. The video amusement industry has seen a demand from players for more immersive games, but has tried to retard the speed of change, instead offering immersive technology in conventional packages, for example, Ridge Racer and Galaxian 3. If LBE centres are to compete directly against FECs then a player-led battle could erupt, placing independent operators in the middle of a free-fire zone. FECs are built to offer a wide selection of game environments to their audience. Redemption in one area, driving games in another, beat-em-ups in a third. They can include centre-piece attractions, large dedicated machines to pull the audience in, but would find it hard to commit a large area to a dedicated LBE set-up. Without more proof of the LBE concept, the operator cannot take a risk, changing horses in mid-stream. While they wait the LBE market could consolidate and expand, making it impossible for FECs to catch up.

In Japan this problem has been circumvented by the creation of small, "Pocket Theme Parks." Amusement manufacturers who have established such advanced concepts in mass player entertainment term these amusement theme parks (ATPs). Much larger versions of the FEC, they create more highly themed environments, including deluxe versions of familiar dedicated systems. Such venues have space to dabble with new concepts such as LBE.

Namco's first foray, Wonder Eggs, was so successful that an extra park has now been opened. This includes the first LBE centre to be opened by a Japanese manufacturer. Licensed from the US company, Magic Edge, it is a test facility to judge what video game elements are needed to be acceptable to Namco's established game audience.

There is more to such centres than just creating a bigger FEC. For many years the theme park industry stagnated regarding the application of technology directly to its visitors. Technology is present in manufacture and in the presentation of its parks, but it has still kept the audience at arms's length. Passive is

the best way to describe the enjoyment found in most parks.

The Japanese industry has created sites using technology similar to that of theme parks, but on a smaller scale, allowing the rider to participate interactively with the experience. The best examples are the newly-opened Galbo venue in Osaka and Joyopolis in Yokohama, both by Sega. Joyopolis is a 12,000 sq.m site that, as expected, showcases the latest technology, but also shows the direction of mass entertainment to come.

Take three of the rides installed at the Sega ATP. The first is Rail Chase: The Ride, a roller coaster with a difference. Its interactive nature allows riders to enjoy the thrill of the ride and also take part in a special dark ride section where, armed with machine guns mounted on the car, players shoot at a variety of targets.

The second example is the VR-1, the first amusement application of Sega's VR technology. It is a motion-based ride offering player participation on a much higher level than previous products. Eight riders use VR displays to shoot at attacking aliens in a game called Space Mission.

The final example, Ghost Hunter, is a full dark ride allowing players to shoot at marauding ghosts. It uses special technology to create the imagery that the players interact with, the whole experience proving hugely successful with the hordes that have camped outside the venue.

Sega has proved the need for interaction and of catering to players' needs when they attend an ATP. Such new rides impact directly against the hopes of Location Based Entertainment to establish a technological lead in home markets such as Japan.

It is true that most LBE sites offer games that feel like scaled down military simulators rather than the film-like experiences promised. These are still in the early stages of development, and allow the video amusement industry a chance to manipulate playability to suit the market they have served for more than 25 years.

To avoid being eaten alive by the amusement giants, LBE developers are forming allegiances to protect their interests. This belies the fact that though the concept of destination entertainment is still popular in theme parks, it is still largely an unknown quantity. Of the five companies to announce that they would launch LBE centres, only three have yet built venues.

The future operator will be a funny animal compared to the present day. The possibility is that most video amusement machines will be played in either manufacturer-franchised FECs, pubs, shopping centres, airports or hotels.

Is New TECHNOLOGY shaking the structure of the industry

1994 has seen an unprecedented rise in the development of arcade venues in Europe and especially the UK. This has been attributed to a number of factors, but what does this boom portend for the current structure of existing industry bodies, and where will such changes leave the operator?

The acronym FEC, now a stock industry phrase, was first coined in Japan, where it described a particular style of arcade aimed at the growing number of families visiting arcades. These included very young children, something reflected in the FECs' decor and air of accessibility.

With the expansion of Japanese amusement giants such as Sega Enterprises into the European market, FEC was used to describe the move from traditional amusement arcades to up-market, high-tech venues.

This move was seen by cynics as an attempt by manufacturers to take control of arcade operations, currently fragmented between a number of independent operators in Europe and the US.

To the rest of the industry the move to FECs is a long overdue attempt by the amusement industry to plough some of its vast profits back into sites. Operators already see the move to larger machines and the constant battle to keep abreast of technology as a fight for survival against the massed ranks of manufacturer-owned franchises.

A metaphor that has been used to describe this is that of a corner shop competing against a supermarket. Though descriptive, this does not give us the full picture, for, unlike the corner shop the arcades and FECs do not offer the same product. Look in any of the new amusement venues and you will see the latest technology and cabinets, not the usual dog-eared offerings lined up against arcade walls.

Various amusement organisations and industry bodies have monitored the move away from the original multi-headed chicken that the amusement industry once was, watching varied groups and classifications emerge into defined pairings.

Amusement With Prizes (AWP) machines have shrunk from pre-1990 numbers, going through a reversal of fortune that dips and rises like a roller coaster. Pinball, another success story of the late

1980s, has again been relegated to the back burner. Dedicated machines have come to the forefront and new technology now seems to be causing new problems for the original structure of the industry.

The more that developers move away from traditional systems the more the industry is affected and gradually these ripples are felt by the distributors, operators and finally players. It is interesting to monitor how Japanese interest in crane games has fuelled a market shift. The need to evaluate new technology's effect on established systems is critical, as redemption has proved a means to revitalise old, seemingly forgotten concepts.

With this new technology, the 1990s also ushered in new ways to present game environments to players. Demand rose for such new games systems to have their own separate classifications, even in some cases, their own industry. The TtLE exhibition and conference, held in the Netherlands in June, was one such gathering, where the diversity of amusement games compared with destination games was highlighted.

Destination entertainment was previously the exclusive preserve of the theme park industry, but the emergence of computer technology now allows virtual environments from the simulation industry to be applied to mass audience entertainment. Why build a large wooden coaster when the whole of the bottom of Loch Ness can be recreated for players to explore? The Loch Ness Experience, by Iwerks Entertainment, is one of a new breed of rides that advanced technology has created, diversifying into the future of technology-driven interactive rides.

Such rides can still offer the same throughput of satisfied customers as a roller coaster, but in a venue a quarter of the size needed for conventional rides. However, the technology is expensive and still a radical departure, one littered with contradictions and unknown factors.

The Themed Entertainment Association (TEA) is one of the new industry bodies that hopes to gather such technologies into a concise market, one able to supply the needs of new operators.

Meanwhile, on the sidelines a disagreement has been festering. Dedicated amusement machines

SEGA PURCHASES DATA EAST PINBALL

In a move that surprised many in the coin-op industry, Sega Enterprises announced at the end of August that they were purchasing Data East Pinball, the Chicago based pinball division of Data East Corp. The official purchase was expected to take place at the end of last month. Sega has paid a reported ¥3.5 billion (\$NZ58 million) for the company and already owns almost 19.5% of Data East's stock.

CHINA ONLY FOR THE BOLD

China is a territory which is to be ventured into "only by the very bold", according to one leading coin machine distributor fresh back from that country.

After an exhaustive trip to look at what is going on there, he commented: "I feel that everyone is rushing into China, but they won't do well, especially those big American and Japanese companies which try to sell expensive new games. The market is too poor and there is too much gambling there. Only the Taiwanese and Hong Kong operators, who understand this point and put in cheap second-hand equipment can hope to make any money. "Grey area games with cheap, cheap boards, is so prolific that it eats away at the regular arcade business."

TAIWAN STILL STRONG

Of all Asian markets, reports show that Taiwan remains the strongest. More and more Japanese and American companies are setting up there, probably with a view to using it as a gateway to China.

Reports suggest that the Japanese coin machine manufacturers are even delaying shipments from their subsidiaries in the US to help prevent bootlegging into south-east Asia, especially Taiwan.

The bootlegging problem is causing some Japanese export managers to get into trouble from their bosses because of the resulting downfall in sales. Shipping from Japan first, is one way to fight bootleggers.

SINGAPORE EXPANDS

The arcades business in Singapore continues to boom. Reports suggest that any

arcades opening are more and more lush. A recent opening in Orchard Road is rumoured to be facing spectacularly high rents with big up-front deposits, but the market appears to be capable of standing it.

SOUTH AMERICA CDs SPARK JUKE BOX BOOM

Juke box manufacturer Rowe has seen sales explode in South America in recent months, as the CD phenomenon has swept the continent.

"As the economies in South America stabilise there is more room for solid growth in the juke box sector," commented the company's Joel Friedman. "Our sales are developing throughout South America and our distributor Belam is doing a great job for us, particularly in Columbia."

Rowe's vending business is also increasing in South America, with the company now supplying such equipment to a total of 63 countries worldwide.

USA IGT OFFER

Gaming machine manufacturer IGT is now offering customers its own casino accounting solution for casinos throughout the world.

The move has come as a result of IGT's purchase of manufacturing company Wyatt, with a spokesperson commenting: "The system is extremely cost effective and has benefits for both IGT and its customers. It will allow customers to evaluate the money-earning potential of IGT machines."

In a separate move, IGT staff have been given the go-ahead to be more aggressive in developing the growing markets in South America. The company is keen to continue its dominance in the gaming machine market by tapping the full potential of the continent.

THAILAND \$7m FEC

The new \$7m family entertainment centre in the Future World Shopping Centre, Bangkok is on schedule to open early December this year. Owners are Amusement World and designers are Forrec, Canada.

Attractions in the complex will include numerous rides, simulators, coasters, play areas, theatres, laser games and amusements.

AUSTRALIA VILLAGE NINE'S CHALLENGE

More details are emerging of the proposals for unique new leisure/theme park/coin-op venues from Village Nine Leisure. As reported in our September issue, two of Australia's leading entertainment companies, the Nine Network and Village Roadshow Ltd., are involved in a \$100m (\$NZ125m) joint venture for "out of home" entertainment.

Village Nine Leisure plans to launch three concepts throughout Australia, New Zealand, Asia and the Pacific Rim over the next three years.

The first concept in Intensity and VNL plans to open a maximum of 20 suburban indoor theme parks in Australia, primarily based in regional shopping centres and nearly always adjacent to a Village Cinema Complex and/or food court area.

We now hear that outside Australia, VNL plans to open its Intensity in Singapore next year while a location in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia is under negotiation. VNL and Westfield are also talking about opening Intensity indoor theme parks in the Westfield Centres in the US.

The second concept is World Live!, a high energy "one stop shop" of live entertainment in restaurants, live entertainment venues, night clubs, comedy clubs, karaoke bars and blues clubs. It is derived from the successful US concept "America Live!" VNL has concluded a licence agreement with America Live! and plans to open the first World Live! venue in Brisbane's Queen Street Mall in mid-'95 followed by a site at the Jam Factory Entertainment Complex in late 1995. Centres will also be established in Auckland, New Zealand; Singapore, Taipei, Thailand, Hong Kong and other major cities in the region.

The third concept is Hide and Seek, interactive adventure playgrounds aimed at one to eight-year-olds. The centres offer a clean, safe environment and feature such activities as swinging bridges, mazes, spiral slides, tunnels, obstacle courses, soft play and aerobics. All centres will be supervised and parents will be encouraged to enjoy the facilities with the children.

UK SOURCE OF VINYL STILL EXISTS

The supply of vinyl records to markets where non-CD juke boxes still exist, is still possible, says British programmer David Powell. His company, David Powell Distributing, of London, is the main supplier of records and CDs to British operators along with competitor Telstar.

Mr Powell said that as many as 15,000 of the 35,000 British juke boxes in existence are still vinyl. Eighty per cent of his business is selling records and CDs to the UK market, but the 20 per cent will cover countries such as Asia, Europe and South Africa with Australia still being one of the strongest users of vinyl.

The number of vinyl records still being pressed is very limited", he said, "and the numbers are falling all the time. We actually carry out private pressings of records to satisfy our demands for vinyl, but we have to guarantee a minimum of 3,000 units. Soon it will be a case of operators not having a choice of records and having to take half-a-dozen a month of whatever is available."

He added: "There are many pubs and cafes which will not sustain the costs of a CD juke box and these are the locations where vinyl boxes still exist, although Sound Leisure are just launching a low-cost CD box which may help them."

HONG KONG NO FAIRYTALE

The return of the pinball game to Hong Kong has not been the fairy-tale so many hoped it would. Pinball was re-admitted to the colony at the beginning of this year after being banned there for several years.

Initial installations saw the game hit averages of HK\$200 to HK\$250 (\$NZ50 to \$NZ62) after the first novelty wore off. Complicating the issue still further is the fact that pinball games have fallen foul of the "zoning" rule in Hong Kong arcades. Pinball games are rated as large games and must have one-and-a-half times as much space as a standard upright. Yet, with an upright video game now making as much as 50 per cent more than a pinball, the chances of the games getting universally acceptable to Hong Kong arcade owners is diminishing. Only the very top games will get an airing.

positive happens to try and push values up, someone breaks rank to try and gain a commercial advantage and the rest of the community is forced to follow suit.

The accompanying chart is an interesting comparison of just what is going on in the international market place and we intend, in successive issues, to add supplementary surveys for pinball and pool. It should be borne in mind that there are always good, bad and indifferent locations.

Just because the Trocadero in Central London gets £3 per play for Daytona, it does not mean that other arcades in Britain similarly get £3. But they will certainly get £1. It is this type of location, our "average" type of site, to which the chart refers.

And it should be remembered that we are looking at "average" machines. For example our figures for dedicated games would not mean that they are typical for major simulators, but rather upright dedicated.

One thing is absolutely clear, however: if you don't have the correct denominations in the country's coinage, there is little prospect in even making a start at getting price of play up to a reasonable or even "adequate level".

WORLDWIDE DEDICATED VIDEO GAMES AND PCBS (all figures calculated in US\$)

Country	Dedicated	PCBs
Australia	75c - \$1.50	47c - 75c
Austria	\$1.80	45c - 90c
Belgium	75c	30c
Bulgaria	22c	15c
CIS	15c	15c
China	25c	5c
Egypt	45c	20c
Finland	75c	23c
France	\$1	40c
Germany	75c	30c
Holland	60c	30c
Hong Kong	75c	30c
Hungary	40c	20c
Italy	75c	30c
Japan	\$1 - \$2	50c - \$1
Lebanon	\$1.05	30c
Malaysia	40c - 80c	25c - 40c
New Zealand	62c - \$1.24	37c - 62c
Norway	\$1.05	q45c
Philippines	32c	16c
Poland	34c	34c
Portugal	60c	30c
Romania	22c	15c
Singapore	66c - \$1.32	33c - 66c
South Africa	50c	15c
Spain	75c	30c
Sweden	\$1.10	45c
Taiwan	75c	37c
Thailand	45c	22c
Turkey	75c	45c
UK	75c	30c



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WHAT PRICE VIDEO PLAY WORLDWIDE?

It can range from as little as NZ9c to \$3.40, but price of play on video games remains the most crucial aspect of operating.

Price of play is one of the most contentious subjects in the coin machine business. Operators traditionally complain that the capital expenditure on machines, whether a complete dedicated game or a printed circuit board (PCB), is too high to enable them to achieve an adequate return.

What is "adequate" of course is open to definition. It may range from the barely acceptable to scrape a living, to insufficient to afford a month-long vacation on a Caribbean island. One therefore views the term with suspicion.

But the argument about return on capital is a very real one when it is applied as an excuse for buying copies. In real terms there is no excuse for this, but the nearest anyone gets to sympathy for buying copies is where they point to the ridiculously low price of play which may be acceptable in their market.

Perhaps loudest in this complaint is the American operator. The absence of a sensible and acceptable coin above 25 cents - in particular the absence of a dollar coin - has meant that the US industry has been stuck with quarter play for over 20 years. Cutting game time is not the answer, for it merely switches off player interest and using multi-coin mechanisms does not work either.



In other countries the opposite has been the effect. In the UK for example the extreme case was recently recorded where a major simulator at the country's top arcade, Family Leisure's Funland in the Trocadero Centre in London's Piccadilly, was taking £3 (\$7.50) per play.

Out in Asia, the Japanese can find 200 Yen for a new dedicated game in a major city location which is around \$3.40. Yet across the water in China, as little as 2c may be the norm for a cheap copy game. In relatively wealthy Hong Kong progressive operators a few years ago tried to get together to raise price of play to HK\$10 (\$2.50) on dedicated games, but fierce competition between the 200 or so arcades in the colony forced prices back down to half that level.

The story is the same everywhere: there is a continual and general outcry against low price of play, but when something

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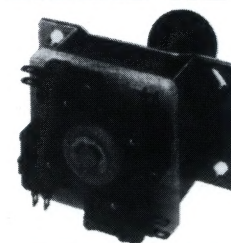
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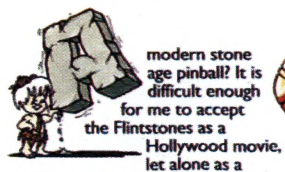
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modern stone age pinball? It is difficult enough for me to accept the Flintstones as a Hollywood movie, let alone as a pinball machine based on a Hollywood movie. Initial prejudices aside, let me say that *The Flintstones* pinball machine carries on the fine traditions of quality sound, animation, and playability that pinball players have come to expect from modern releases, while at the same time indicating that the designers are open to change and listening to popular opinion by introducing concurrency as a feature. This means that most features in the game, like multiballs (multiball?) and modes can run concurrently. This can be quite a bonus for those of us who usually just flail wildly at anything during multiball in a vain attempt to get a crack at the jackpot, as it is quite likely that various modes and things will be started quite accidentally. And for the more cocky player, these can even be claimed as intentional.

OK, so we have plenty of nostalgic scenarios and scenery from Bedrock (or blatant promotion for the movie if you are cynically minded) adorning the game, including the brontosaurus which Fred slides down after work, a bowling alley, the cat-throwing-Fred-out scene, and of course theme music.

Speaking of music, the music which accompanies gameplay is quite addictive at first but quickly becomes tiring. I suppose there is very little one can do about such things, but there is just something about Rick Moranis's voice repeating "Huh hey! Ball saved", over and over, that grates me. Not that I need ball savers all that often, I uh, well, ahem ...

There are only a few modes in *The Flintstones* – four to be precise – and they are not remarkably innovative or creative. However, this makes quite a pleasant change from having to remember hundreds of different and complicated mode rules during a game. One is a repeat of *Bad Impersonator* from *Judge Dredd* and another a two-ball multiball frenzy. The themes for these modes are a bit lost on me, not having seen the movie, but I am sure they are relevant, somehow.

The *Flintstones*' main novelty feature is the bottom loop, which allows the ball to loop underneath the flipper area and be returned to the opposite side of the playfield. Quite a shock when it first occurs.

Rule Sheet

Skill Shot

The plunged ball will end up at the DIG roll-overs. One will be flashing and is movable with the flippers. Light the lane the ball will go through. Skill shot awards start at 5 million, and increase by 2 million.

Modes

There are four modes in this game, with a mystery mode for completing them. Start a

mode by completing 1-2-3 on the ramps. All three shots may not be on the same ramp so look for the lights, and watch to see which flipper the ball goes to. The bumpers change the currently flashing mode.

The modes are:

Fred's choice – Timer starts at 20 seconds. The orbits and centre lane are lit. The left orbit is Shot A (20 million), the centre lane

is shot B (10 million), and the right orbit is shot C (15 million). When a shot is hit, its value goes up by 3 million.

Joe's Diner – This is a Move Your Car mode, and it is by far the coolest one Dr Flash has come up with! 15 million counts down, and once the first shot is hit, you have 20 seconds to make two more for the same value. Shoot the centre lane to collect it all.

ADAM FREY

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The animation in *The Flintstones* is again excellent. Look out for the animation during the modes, jackpot animations (pyrotechnics galore) and the opening animation for multiball. The sound effects are appropriately cartoonish and really take me back to Saturday mornings in front of the tube.

The *Flintstones* is strange in its playability. Some shots are designed really well and tend to flow nicely into each other, while others are real mongrels. There are also a couple of straight-down-the-middle traps, like failed centre shots and bowl-a-rama, which are always a pain.

According to tech extraordinaire Cameron Silver, (you'll notice I never get plugs in his reviews) the game is quite easy to maintain, except for the flimsy brontosaurus, so you should find your local machine in fairly good order, which is essential for enjoyment of the game.

A definite quality new game with many hours of fun to be had, but only if the movie is not too sacrilegious for you.

The great thing about this feature is that it allows balls from either ramp to be fed to either flipper as appropriate to the situation. The other novelty feature is the time machine. It is a disc thing that sits in the upper left corner and spins. Hey, sometimes the simple things are the best. Remember Bear Kicks?

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Bedrock Water Buffaloes- A 25 second mode that is the same as *Bad Impersonator* in *Judge Dredd*. The display shows a band playing on stage. Shoot the BED or ROCK drop targets to throw something at them.

Dino Frenzy – Two ball multiball. The 'Frenzy' light at all the Dino/Frenzy targets will be lit. Hitting any of the targets will award the current value and a cute animation. One of the targets will have the 'Dino' light on, also; hitting the target will increase the value by 1 million (this applies during the whole game). The value starts at 10 million.

Mystery Mode- This can only be started after the other four. You have 20 seconds to knock down the BED and ROCK drop targets for 100 million. Each target down scores five million. The mode ends after 20 seconds, or when the big points are awarded, and Fred's Choice will become the currently flashing mode.

Multiball

Invent concrete to start multiball. There are three (well, four) ways to spot letters in CONCRETE; completing BED, completing ROCK, (for the first multiball only) completing DIG, and getting the "Spell CONCRETE" award from the Bronto Crane.

Once CONCRETE is complete (there are lights in the centre of the playfield), 'Start Multiball' will be lit on the orbits. Shoot this and the ball will be fed to the popper.

The ball will be popped into the time machine, and two other balls will be launched into it. The jackpot starts at 40 million and increases as long as there is at least one ball in the time machine. (Note that the jackpot does not max at 255 million.) Collect the regular jackpot at the centre lane, then the super jackpot at the U-turn.

Note that the ball that scores the jackpot is fed to the upper flipper for a shot at the super (provided it has enough speed). The Super jackpot lights after the regular jackpot, and the regular jackpot relights after the super.

If multiball ends and no jackpots were scored, you have twenty seconds to restart it.

The ball saver is on at the start of multiball, and relaunched balls go into the time machine – very handy indeed!

Bronto Crane

The left orbit lights Bronto Crane, and another left orbit will cause the ball to be diverted to the popper. (Note that the ball that lights Bronto Crane will not be stopped at the DIG lanes, but will continue to the upper flipper.)

The Bronto Crane is basically a random award. The ones I've seen so far are:

Bedrock Derby – Usually the first one to be awarded. The display shows two people racing on Dinos. Each bumper hit increases the speed of one of them (the one you want to win). It is a 20 (?) second mode, and you get 30 million for winning. It is essentially a good idea, but all you need are a couple of bumper hits and you've won. Both Dinos go at the same speed, so once you're up in front, you stay there.

Bowling Power-Up – Displays a cool animation of Fred twirling a bowling ball on his finger. This guarantees a strike on the next Go Bowling shot.

Light 2x Playfield – Lights the 2x Playfield light at the U-turn lane. When hit, all playfield values are doubled for twenty seconds.

Other awards are: 1, 2, 3 values doubled; Extra Ball; Spell CONCRETE; Multiplier Maxed and Big Points (20 million).

Time Machine Target

This target (just above the left Shell Targets) starts three modes. Time Machine – Starts the Time Machine for 20 seconds. Counter starts at 10 million, and any ball put into the time machine (either orbit) will start the value escalating until the ball comes out. After 20 seconds, the value is awarded, and the time machine stops.

Job Change – Lights Change Job at the right orbit. Shooting the orbit awards 25 million.

Help – Starts a search mode similar to *Creature's* multiball. Three shots are lit to Search for the kids: Left orbit, Centre lane, and Right orbit. You have 20 seconds to find the kids by shooting Search. 5 million is awarded per search, and 15 million for finding them. Shoot the right ramp to rescue them.

Bowling

One of the two ramps is always lit to Go Bowling. Shoot the ramp (the ball will be fed to the right flipper) and the Bowl-a-Rama will be lit for about five seconds. You'll hear the quote "Go for the strike". If you shoot a strike (centre target), you get five million. A spare (side target) is worth three million. A gutter ball (miss Bowl-a-Rama altogether) you get nothing. If you have received the Bowling Power-Up (obtained from the Bronto Crane, or completing Yabba-Dabba-Doo), Go Bowling will be a strike (as long as you hit Bowl-a-Rama). The quote will change to "I can't miss with this one".

Three strikes starts Bowl-a-Rama multiball (two ball), where a Super Strike (centre target) is worth 20 million, and a Super Spare (side target) is worth 10 million.

(These rules were compiled from a pre-release test machine, so may vary slightly from current models.)

Extra-special thanks to: Adrian Donati, Louis Koziarz and David Graham Arnold.

CAMERON SILVER

